

March 25, 2004

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

REF: RM-10868

I come to you today **not** in support of RM-10868.

The many debates and arguments over the recent years have once again come before the Amateur community at large with the recent international agreement currently in place. In an effort to come to the point quickly without reiterating the many views and comments over the past years, proficiency in Morse Code (CW) for Amateurs is a Key component of communication for our community service responsibilities under and within Department of Homeland Security (DHS). As many of us know, during difficult communication conditions, especially when voice and digital communication fail, Morse Code will be a back-up communication mode for brief secure-coded and non-secure messages. (The speed of copy is not nearly as important as the ability to copy at a speed necessary to pass traffic. This is typically between 5 and 13 words per minute). The Amateur's ability to transmit messages during difficult atmospheric conditions will be critical when non-licensed operators are not capable of transmitting and copying CW when voice and digital modes fail. I would make an additional observation, for those Amateurs who are involved in Homeland Security at their local, state, or federal levels, they should be required to pass at least a 5 wpm proficiency examination, renewable every 10 years with their license.

In closing, I would like to make two additional points. The first is leadership. The world-at-large looks to the United States to lead and in my view we should embrace that responsibility with a vision of the future and keep Morse code as a requirement and Key component of Amateur Licensing. The second is historic. The Amateur community has the unique opportunity again to write into history, just as our predecessors did during WWI and WWII, and again establish Amateur Radio as a Key component of our national security. Our experience, skills, and specific proficiencies place us into that position. We should exploit the opportunity, target our skills and proficiencies, and advertise on a national level to the public-at-large, all in an effort to solidly establish Amateur Radio as the viable community service and advantage for all citizens and government agencies.

Thank you in advance for your time and anticipated support on this critical matter.

Sincerely,

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Cc: file